

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Final Report: Puerto Rico Child and Family Services Review

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The CFSR was conducted the week of August 4, 2003. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by Puerto Rico's child welfare agency – the Administration for Families and Children (ADFAN) in the Department of the Family;
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides child welfare data for the year 2001;
- Reviews of 42 cases at three sites (San Juan, Mayagüez, and Guayama) in Puerto Rico; and
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

Forty-two cases were reviewed in Puerto Rico, compared to 50 cases in other CFSRs. The decision to review 42 cases was made to ensure the timely completion of all onsite review activities. Specifically, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) was concerned about the time that would be required to review a larger number of case records that were written in Spanish, which required translation for purposes of completing the CFSR instrument, as well as the time associated with conducting the daily debriefings in both English and Spanish.

A key finding of the Puerto Rico CFSR was that Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with any of the seven child welfare outcomes. One area of concern is Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate). Reviewers determined that the outcome was substantially achieved in 65.0 percent of the cases reviewed. Although the Commonwealth's performance on this outcome varied across the three sites reviewed, the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity was not achieved at any of the sites. The CFSR found that ADFAN is not effective in its efforts to provide services to families to prevent removal or address the risk of harm. The main concerns cited with respect to this outcome were: (1) the lack of services within the communities to meet the needs of children and families; and (2) the lack of comprehensive needs assessments, due primarily to infrequent contacts between caseworkers and families.

Another area where the Commonwealth's performance is most in need of improvement is Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations). This outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 45 percent of the foster care cases reviewed. The CFSR found that ADFAN is consistently effective with regard to preventing foster care re-entries and ensuring

placement stability for children in foster care. However, the CFSR found that ADFAN is not consistently effective with regard to: (1) establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner; (2) achieving permanency for children (through adoption, reunification, or permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner; or (3) ensuring that older children in long-term foster care receive appropriate services to assist them in making the transition from foster care to independent living.

Stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR noted that the courts, in general, do not adhere to the timelines for permanency established by the Adoption and Safe Families Act. For the period under review, reviewers found that the courts often will close the court case when the child welfare agency is granted permanent custody of the child, even if parental rights are maintained and the child has not achieved his or her permanency goals. Consequently, permanency hearings are not being held for children in foster care every 12 months and, if the agency files for termination of parental rights, the court has to open a new case. Recently, in an effort to resolve this problem, ADFAN and the Court Improvement Project in the Office of Court Administration collaborated to identify children who have not yet achieved their permanency goal. The court cases are now being re-opened so that the required permanency hearings can be held.

A third area of concern with regard to the Commonwealth's CFSR performance pertained to Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs). Of the 42 cases reviewed, 33.3 percent were determined to have substantially achieved this outcome. The CFSR found that all of the indicators for this outcome were areas in need of improvement, including assessing needs and providing services to families, involving parents and children in the case planning process, and establishing sufficient contact with the children and parents in the cases. Stakeholders attributed Puerto Rico's performance on this outcome to both a lack of services and high caseloads for workers.

With regard to the systemic factors, the Commonwealth was determined to be in substantial conformity with the factors of Agency Responsiveness to the Community and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The Commonwealth did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Statewide Information System, Case Review System, Training, Service Array, and Quality Assurance System.

The overall findings with regard to the Commonwealth's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in Table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in Table 2. Table 3 presents the Commonwealth's performance relative to the national standards and Table 4 provides information pertaining to the substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment for the same children (item 2).

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. Although the outcome was substantially achieved in 92.7 percent of the cases reviewed, which is more than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity, Puerto Rico's rate of maltreatment recurrence in calendar year 2001 (9.3%), as reported in the State Data Profile, does not meet the national standard of 6.1 percent or less. In addition, although data from the State Data Profile indicate that Puerto Rico's rate of maltreatment in foster care (0.45%) meets the national standard of 0.57 percent or less, several stakeholders suggested that this percentage may represent an undercount of actual maltreatment in foster care. They noted that this undercount may be attributed in part to the fact that ADFAN does not enter subsequent reports of maltreatment on open child welfare cases into the Central Registry.

A key CFSR finding is that ADFAN is effective in responding to maltreatment reports in a timely manner. Stakeholders noted that there has been a vast improvement in responding to maltreatment reports over the past 2 years as a result of an interagency effort, organized by ADFAN, that involved the Department of Education, universities, and retired caseworkers joining forces to help diminish a backlog of over 5,000 uninvestigated reports.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of child welfare agency efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in reducing the risk of harm to children.

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 65.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across the CFSR sites. Reviewers determined that the outcome was substantially achieved in 83 percent of Mayagüez cases, 80 percent of Guayama cases, and 44 percent of San Juan cases.

A key finding of the CFSR case review was that ADFAN is not effective in providing services to families to prevent removal or to address the risk of harm to the children. In several in-home cases, identified service needs and safety issues were not addressed by the agency. In four cases, more than a year passed from the time the case was opened to the time that the agency caseworker made contact with the family to assess service needs. The key concerns identified with respect to this outcome were (1) a lack of services in the communities to meet the needs of children and families; and (2) a lack of comprehensive assessments of needs, due primarily to infrequent contact between caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in preventing foster care re-entry (item 5), ensuring placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's success in achieving permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or whether children who have "other planned living arrangements" as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 45.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for fiscal year (FY) 2001, Puerto Rico did not meet the national standards for (1) the percentage of children who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care; or (2) the percentage of children discharged to finalized adoptions within 24 months of entry into foster care.

However, the State Data Profile indicates that for FY 2001, Puerto Rico met the national standards for (1) the percentage of children who entered foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode, and (2) the percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced no more than 2 placement settings.

Performance on this outcome varied across the localities included in the onsite CFSR. Reviewers determined that the outcome was substantially achieved in 80 percent of Guayama cases, 44 percent of San Juan cases, and 17 percent of Mayagüez cases.

The case review findings and data provided in the State Data Profile suggest that ADFAN is effective in preventing re-entry of children into foster care and in ensuring placement stability. However, ADFAN is not consistently effective with regard to (1)

reunifying children in a timely manner, (2) achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner, and (3) establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.

Identified barriers to timely permanency were both court-related and agency-related. Court-related barriers included (1) granting of continuances; (2) delays in changing a permanency goal from reunification to adoption due to a general reluctance to seek termination of parental rights (TPR); (3) lack of understanding by the courts of the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regarding permanency; and (4) until just prior to the onsite CFSR, the absence of a Puerto Rico statute that reinforces and requires adherence to the ASFA requirements. The Puerto Rico Court Improvement Project is addressing these barriers as well as the implementation of the new law that is intended to strengthen requirements related to ASFA. Identified agency-related barriers included delays in completing paperwork and filing for TPR (attributed in part to an agency reluctance to seek TPR), and not fully exploring permanency alternatives with children and their relative or non-relative foster parents.

Permanency Outcome 2. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 70.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Performance with respect to achieving Permanency Outcome 2 varied across localities included in the onsite CFSR. Case reviewers determined that this outcome was substantially achieved in 80 percent of Guayama cases, 78 percent of San Juan cases, and 50 percent of Mayagüez cases.

CFSR findings indicate that ADFAN makes concerted efforts to place children in close proximity to their families and to seek relatives as potential placement resources. However, case reviewers determined that the agency was not consistent in its efforts to place siblings together in foster care or to preserve connections between children and their families through frequent visitation or other

forms of contact. A key concern identified pertained to the inconsistency in agency efforts to ensure that visitation between parents and children was sufficient to meet the needs of the family and promote attainment of permanency goals.

Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Well Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator assesses the child welfare agency's effectiveness with regard to actively involving parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and the children's parents (item 20).

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 33.3 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

The CFSR case reviews revealed that ADFAN was not consistently effective with regard to (1) assessing needs and providing services to children, parents, and foster parents; (2) involving children and parents in case planning; and (3) establishing face-to-face contact between caseworkers and children and parents that was of sufficient frequency and quality to ensure children's safety and/or promote attainment of case goals.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in addressing and meeting the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 77.4 percent of the cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for substantial conformity. A key CFSR finding was that ADFAN does not always effectively assess children's educational needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency's efforts to meet children's physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

ADFAN did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 51.2 percent of the 39 applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

Performance on this outcome varied considerably across locations. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Guayama cases, compared to 45 percent of Mayagüez cases and 29 percent of San Juan cases.

A key CFSR finding is that ADFAN is not consistent in meeting the physical health needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases. Case review findings also indicate that ADFAN is not consistently effective in meeting children's mental health needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases, although this was not the situation in Guayama.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the Commonwealth is operating a Statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care.

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. Puerto Rico does not have a Statewide system that can accurately, readily, and reliably report on the status, location, goals, and characteristics of all children in foster care.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the Commonwealth's performance with regard to the systemic factor of a Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case

reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

Puerto Rico was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. CFSR findings indicate that ADFAN does not consistently involve parents in the case planning process. In addition, 6-month case reviews and 12-month permanency reviews are not being held in a timely manner. A key concern identified is that the court will often close the court case when permanent custody is transferred to the child welfare agency. In Puerto Rico, permanent custody can be granted to the child welfare agency even though parental rights have not been terminated. As a result, court cases often are closed before children achieve permanency.

The CFSR also found that there is no consistent and routine process for filing for termination of parental rights (TPR) for children in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months as provided in ASFA and cases are not routinely reviewed for the appropriateness of TPR. In addition, after the court case is closed, it must be reopened by the court in order for the child welfare agency to file for TPR. Stakeholders and case reviewers noted that this results in considerable delays in achieving permanency for children.

CFSR findings also indicate that there is no formal process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about case hearings and reviews or for providing them with the opportunity to be heard during reviews and hearings.

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the Commonwealth has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the agency is operating a quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. Although the CFSR determined that Puerto Rico has developed and implemented safety standards for all foster and adoptive homes, ADFAN does not have an identifiable quality assurance system.

Training

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of ADFAN's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. According to the Statewide Assessment, required pre-service training for new ADFAN staff was discontinued in 1995. At present, new employees receive general information orientations prior to initiating their work, but these activities are not integrated into a uniform pre-service training plan and their focus is on information sharing rather than skill building. In addition, the agency does not have an ongoing training program and does not require staff to participate in ongoing training.

The CFSR also found that, although Puerto Rico has developed child development training modules for foster parents, the training has not been consistently offered in all 10 regions, thus not all foster parents have been trained. Prospective foster parents receive a general orientation regarding agency procedures, foster parent's responsibilities, and licensing requirements. However, ADFAN's current policy does not require foster parents to receive pre-service training prior to having a child placed in their home.

Service Array

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions. Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The CFSR determined that there are many critical services that are not available to children and families and the scarcity of these services is a barrier to achieving children's permanency goals in a timely manner. Stakeholders expressed concern about the lack of mental health evaluation and treatment services, housing, transportation, respite care, sexual abuse treatment services, therapeutic foster homes, substance abuse treatment services, and domestic violence treatment services. The CFSR also found that some critical services are not available in rural areas of the Commonwealth and, in communities where services are available, there often are long waiting lists to access the services.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of ADFAN's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which

the ADFAN coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally-assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Puerto Rico is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The CFSR found that ADFAN engages a number of community providers as well as public and private entities in the discussion and resolution of child welfare issues. Stakeholders noted, however, that there is no structured process for soliciting and using the input of external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan, although they reported that ADFAN is in the process of creating opportunities for that purpose.

The CFSR also determined that Puerto Rico has creatively assembled and accessed resources from various public and private agencies serving families in an effort to meet children's and parents' service needs despite the scarcity of services throughout the Commonwealth. Also, Puerto Rico has established a Stakeholders' Council, and one of its main purposes is to facilitate the coordination of services.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the following: (1) the standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), (2) the compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), (3) efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and (4) activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children.

Puerto Rico achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factor pertaining to Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention. CFSR findings indicate that Puerto Rico has implemented licensing and certification standards for foster and adoptive homes that are in accord with the recommended national standards and that are applied equally to foster and adoptive homes, whether relative or non-relative. In addition, all licensing and certification standards require criminal background screenings, which are renewed every 6 months, and the agency has established a process for cross-jurisdictional adoption placements.

Table 1. Puerto Rico CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings		
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards?</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Safety Outcome 1-Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	92.7	1 met, 1 not met			
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				Strength	87	
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				ANI	93	No
Safety Outcome 2 - Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	65.0				
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	61	
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	75	
Permanency Outcome 1- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	45.0	2 met, 2 not met			
Item 5: Foster care re-entry				Strength	90	Yes
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				Strength	85	Yes
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	65	
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, placement with relatives				ANI	67	No
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	25	No
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	0	
Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	70.0				
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	85	
Item 12: Placement with siblings				ANI	82	
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	70	
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	84	
Item 15: Relative placement				Strength	85	
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	58	

*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

Table 2. Puerto Rico CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings			
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Well Being Outcome 1 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	33.3				
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents				ANI	45	
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning				ANI	40	
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child				ANI	55	
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents				ANI	48	
Well Being Outcome 2 - Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	77.4				
Item 21: Educational needs of child				ANI	77	
Well Being Outcome 3 - Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs are met	No	51.2				
Item 22: Physical health of child				ANI	75	
Item 23: Mental health of child				ANI	56	

*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

Table 3: Puerto Rico's Performance on the Six Outcome Measures for Which National Standards have been Established

Outcome Measure	National Standard	Puerto Rico Data
Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of CY 2001, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?	6.1% or less	9.3%
Of all children who were in foster care in the first 9 months of CY 2001, what percent experienced maltreatment from foster parents or facility staff members?	.57% or less	.45%
Of all children who entered foster care in FY 2001, what percent were re-entering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?	8.6% or less	2.4%
Of all children reunified from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care?	76.2% or more	56.1%
Of all children who were adopted from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into foster care?	32.0% or more	14.9%
Of all children in foster care during FY 2001 for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7% or more	99.6%

Table 4: Puerto Rico Ratings for the Seven Systemic Factors

Systemic Factors	In Substantial Conformity?*	Rating
IV. Statewide Information System	No (2)	
Item 24: System can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals of children in foster care		ANI
V. Case Review System	No (2)	
Item 25: Process for developing a case plan and for joint case planning with parents		ANI
Item 26: Process for 6-month case reviews		ANI
Item 27: Process for 12-month permanency hearings		ANI
Item 28: Process for seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA		ANI
Item 29: Process for notifying caregivers of reviews and hearings and for opportunity for them to be heard		ANI
VI. Quality Assurance System	No (2)	
Item 30: Standards to ensure quality services and ensure children's safety and health		Strength
Item 31: Identifiable QA system that evaluates the quality of services and improvements		ANI
VII. Training	No (1)	
Item 32: Provision of initial staff training		ANI
Item 33: Provision of ongoing staff training that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge.		ANI
Item 34: Provision of training for caregivers and adoptive parents that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge		ANI
VIII. Service Array	No (1)	
Item 35: Availability of array of critical services		ANI
Item 36: Accessibility of services across all jurisdictions		ANI
Item 37: Ability to individualize services to meet unique needs		ANI
IX. Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Yes (3)	
Item 38: Engages in ongoing consultation with critical stakeholders in developing the CFSP		Strength
Item 39: Develops annual progress reports in consultation with stakeholders		ANI
Item 40: Coordinates services with other Federal programs		Strength
X. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention	Yes (4)	
Item 41: Standards for foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 42: Standards are applied equally to all foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 43: Conducts necessary criminal background checks		Strength
Item 44: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect children's racial and ethnic diversity		Strength
Item 45: Uses cross-jurisdictional resources to find placements		Strength

*Systemic factors are rated on a scale from 1 to 4. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates "Not in Substantial Conformity." A rating of 3 or 4 indicates Substantial Conformity.

** Individual items may be rated either as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

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Introduction

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- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2001;
- Reviews of 42 cases at three sites (San Juan, Mayagüez, and Guayama) in Puerto Rico; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

Forty-two cases were reviewed in Puerto Rico, compared to 50 cases in other CFSRs. The decision to review 42 cases was made to ensure the timely completion of all onsite review activities. Specifically, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) was concerned about the time that would be required to review a larger number of case records that were written in Spanish, which required translation for purposes of completing the CFSR instrument, as well as the time associated with conducting the daily debriefings in both English and Spanish.

The key characteristics of the 42 cases reviewed are the following:

- Eighteen cases were reviewed in San Juan, 12 in Guayama, and 12 in Mayagüez.
- All 42 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- Twenty cases were “foster care cases” (cases in which children were in the care and custody of the State child welfare agency and in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 22 cases were “in-home services cases” (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained with their families and no child in the family was in out-of-home care during the period under review).
- Of the 20 foster care cases, 14 children (70%) were younger than age 10 at the start of the period under review; 3 children (15%) were at least 10 years old, but not yet 13 years old; and 3 children (15%) were 13 or older.
- All children in the family were Hispanic in 30 cases (72%), of 2 or more races in 9 cases (21%), and Caucasian in 3 cases (7%).
- Of the 42 cases reviewed, the primary reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case was the following: